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85/100

The theme I have chosen is courage in the face of insurmountable odds. I picked a soldier, and two pilots' tales to illustrate my theme. Christians Appy's book part III escalations contained many stories that I could have used, but the three below were very compelling stories. Most people could not have gone through their trials and tribulations and survived.

Dennis Deal was a Lieutenant on his first combat mission in Vietnam. His story was in the chapter about the Central Highlands. He described how he was completely terrified while the battle was raging. "It was Terrifying. I was terrified almost to the point of insanity." Somehow he was able to get past that fear and acted courageously during the fighting. "All you need is one more millimeter than the guys around you and they're okay."

of what?

Later during the battle he was sent to try and recover Lieutenant Henry's lost platoon. He was on the extreme right of his platoon with no other American units to his right. While crawling to reach the objective he was flanked by six NVA soldiers and somehow he managed to kill all six of them without receiving a scratch. The odds of him killing six soldiers that are shooting at him without being wounded are almost impossible.

Is this lack of courage?

Porter Halyburton was a prisoner of war from 1965 to 1973. What is remarkable about Halyburton is that he was able to endure isolation, interrogation, indoctrination, and torture for eight years. He showed great courage by functioning after receiving wounds, when his plane was hit by enemy fire. He calmly and coolly removed shrapnel from his hand, assessed his situation, and ejected the aircraft.

past tense

Once he was captured he was forced into isolation with no contact from other prisoners. "A tree had forced a leaf up between the shutters-a green leaf. I took that as a sign that no matter how isolated I was, God was somehow going to send me a sign." It took an internal courage to want to stay alive. The Vietnamese would place his bowl of rice outside his cell so it would become infested with ants making it inedible.

and ...

Halyburton was tortured in an attempt to get him to divulge information or to sign confessions. At first the guards beat him to soften him up. After that the torture began. The torture he described was called max - cuffs. "Your arms were pulled up behind your back and then they put these handcuffs on the upper part of your arm. Then they tied a rope on your wrists and pulled it up; I could actually see my fingertips over the top of my head when they did that. It pressed the nerves against the bone. It was like molten metal flowing through your veins just indescribable pain."